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SUBJECT: SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS FOR FIRST NINE MONTHS OF
1976

REF: MOSCOW A-287

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SUMMARY: BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. NINE MONTH SOVIET TRADE STATISTICS SHOW USSR SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED RATE OF GROWTH OF DEFICIT BALANCE OF TRADE WITH ADVANCED WESTERN COUNTRIES IN THIRD QUARTER OF 1976, PRIMARILY THROUGH DIMINUTION IN RATE OF GROWTH OF IMPORTS. TOTAL DEFICIT WITH WEST, FOR 1976 HOWEVER, INCREASED BY 276.6 MILLION RUBLES (ABOUT \$368.8 MILLION AT 1 RUBLE EQUALS \$1.33) TO 2,244.8 MILLION RUBLES (ABOUT \$2,993 MILLION). BIGGEST DEFICITS INCURRED WITH U.S., FRG, JAPAN, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL AND CANADA. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOVIET POSITIVE BALANCE WITH POLAND INCREASED FROM 65 MILLION RUBLES (SIX MONTHS, 1976) TO 206.6 MILLION. SOVIET EXPORTS ARE UP BY ABOUT 8.5 PERCENT TO POLAND OVER NINE MONTHS OF 1975, WITH SOVIET IMPORTS DOWN BY SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 1.0 PERCENT. END SUMMARY.

1. NOVEMBER ISSUE OF FOREIGN TRADE GIVES SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS BY COUNTRY AND BY COUNTRY GROUPINGS FOR THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1976 AS COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1975. ACCORDING TO SOVIET STATISTICS THE TOTAL TRADE TURNOVER WAS 41,903.3 MILLION RUBLES FOR JAN-SEPT 1976, AN INCREASE OF 12 PERCENT OVER THE SAME PERIOD IN 1975. TRADE TURNOVER WITH "SOCIALIST" COUNTRIES (23,129.3 MILLION RUBLES) ACCOUNTED FOR 55 PERCENT OF TOTAL SOVIET TRADE, WITH A FAVORABLE BALANCE OF 520 MILLION RUBLES. TRADE WITH DEVELOPED CAPITALIST COUNTRIES (14,027 MILLION RUBLES) WAS 33.4 PERCENT OF SOVIET TRADE AND INCREASED BY 27 PERCENT. THE SOVIET TRADE DEFICIT WITH THESE COUNTRIES WAS 2,521.4 MILLION RUBLES, AN INCREASE OF ONLY 276.6 MILLION RUBLES OVER THE SIX-MONTH DEFICIT FOR 1976 AND OF ONLY 6 PERCENT OVER LAST YEAR'S NINE MONTH FIGURE. THE GREATLY IMPROVED PERFORMANCE IN SOVIET EXPORTS TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (PLUS 33 PERCENT) VIS-A-VIS THE FIRST THREE QUARTERS OF 1975, WITH IMPORTS INCREASING BY ONLY 23 PERCENT, HELD DOWN THE INCREASE IN THE DEFICIT.

2. ACCORDING TO SOVIET FIGURES, A SUBSTANTIAL SHARE (58 PERCENT) OF THE TRADE IMBALANCE WITH THE DEVELOPED WEST REMAINS WITH THE UNITED STATES, WHICH ALONE ACCOUNTS FOR A DEFICIT OF 1,480.3 MILLION RUBLES. OTHER MAJOR SOVIET DEFICITS (ALL FIGURES IN MILLIONS OF RUBLES) WERE INCURRED TO THE FRG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(611.6), THE USSR'S LARGEST CAPITALIST TRADING PARTNER, AND JAPAN (476.3), LARGELY FOR INDUSTRIAL GOODS; CANADA (428.3) AND AUSTRALIA (342.2) FOR AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES; AND BRAZIL (196.3) AND ARGENTINA (193.3) AMONG FOOD-SUPPLYING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. TOTAL TRADE WITH THE U.S. WAS REPORTED TO BE 1,786.1 MILLION RUBLES, OF WHICH 1,633.2 MILLION RUBLES WERE SOVIET IMPORTS. TOTAL TRADE WITH THE U.S. INCREASED 111 PERCENT AND IMPORTS 120 PERCENT OVER

BILATERAL TRADE IN THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD OF
1975.

3. AMONG CEMA COUNTRIES TRADE WITH DZECHOSLOVAKIA INCREASED
THE MOST SIGNIFICANTLY (370.9 MILLION RUBLES) OVER 1975,
PRIMARILY SOVIET IMPORTS (UP BY 226.5 MILLION). SOVIET
EXPORTS TO POLAND INCREASED MARKEDLY DURING THE THIRD
QUARTER OF 1976 AND, AT A TOTAL OF 1,948.9 MILLION RUBLES,
REPRESENTED AN INCREASE OF 8.5 PERCENT OVER THE CORRESPONDING
FIGURE FOR 1975. SOVIET IMPORTS FROM POLAND WERE
1,778.3 MILLION RUBLES, SLIGHTLY DOWN FROM 1975, RESULTING
IN A TRADE IMBALANCE OF 206.6 MILLION RUBLES OF SOVIET
GOODS AND SERVICES GOING TO ITS HARD-PRESSED WESTERN
NEIGHBOR.

4. SOVIET TRADE TURNOVER FELL NOTABLY (ALL FIGURES IN
MILLIONS OF RUBLES) VIS-A-VIS 1975 WITH NORTH KOREA (64.1)
AND WITH THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: EGYPT (216.6),
IRAN (70.0), INDIA (47.3), NIGERIA (63.4), AND PERU (85.6).
END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT: THE RELATIVE
IMPROVEMENT IN THE USSR'S TRADE BALANCE WITH THE WEST - I.E., A
SLOWDOWN IN THE GROWTH OF THE HARD CURRENCY DEFICIT, APPEARS TO
STEM FROM A COMBINATION OF SOME BELT
TIGHTENING AT HOME, THE BUSINESS UPTURN IN WESTERN EUROPE
AND PERHAPS SOME RELIEF PROVIDED BY THE FORESHADOWING OF
AN EXCELLENT 1976 GRAIN CROP.

6. THE FIGURE FOR U.S. IMPORTS IS ABOUT \$2.177 BILLION, OR
SOME \$340 MILLION HIGHER THAN USDOC, 9-MONTH FIGURES
FOR U.S. EXPORTS TO THE USSR. THIS SEEMS LIKE AN UNUSUALLY
HIGH DISCREPANCY. MATLOCK
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